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Chapter Two

SUBVERTING NEGRO CHURCHES

Created doubt, lack of confidence, suspicion; setting up situations that bring about racial bitterness, violence and conflict; putting forth demands so unrealistic that race relations are worsened; attacking everybody in disagreement as reactionaries, fascists, Ku Kluxers among whites and Uncle Toms among Negroes, constitute the red's pattern of operation.

Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of Negroes, in whose name the Communists and their ilk presume to speak, have not fallen for the blandishments of the Reds. They know a red light when they see one. The same cannot be said of many Negro intellectuals carrying the ball for Communists. Since the Communists have always looked upon Negro intellectuals as "shallow," "superficial," "phrase-mongers" and "incompetents" "looking for a loaf when they, on a basis of ability, are not worthy of a crumb," their pro-communist behavior becomes all the more tragic and ludicrous.

Only after the order came from Moscow in the 1934-35 period to win over the Negro intellectual by deceptive flattery and adulation did the red's public attitude toward them change. The Kremlin concluded that these "superficial phonies" could serve the cause of Communism.

A large number of Negro ministers are all for the Communists. Some are prominent and influential; others are "run of the mill." They in common believe that beating the racial drums is a short cut to prominence, money and the realization of personal ambitions even if the Negro masses are left prostrate and bleeding—expendables in the mad scramble for power.

Abner W. Berry, columnist in *The Daily Worker*, official organ of the Communist Party, recently praised these ministers as fulfilling their "historic role," i.e., delivering the Negro into the hands of the Communists. Neither his pen nor his lips had such praise prior to the 1934-35 period. Then the Moscow line was clear.

The resolution on the Negro Question stated:

In the work among the Negroes, special attention should be paid to the role

played by the churches and preachers who are acting on behalf of American imperialism. The Party must conduct a continuous and carefully worked out campaign among the Negro masses, sharpened primarily against the preachers and the churchmen, who are the agents of the oppressors of the Negro race.*

All the instructions from Moscow at the time ordered reds to “combat the influence of the church” because the church, “by offering to the Negro worker and peasant for the miseries they are enduring in this world, compensation in heaven, are befogging the minds of the Negro workers and peasants, making them a helpless prey to capitalism and imperialism.”†

The public denunciation of Negro “sky pilots”‡ was likewise stopped on orders from Moscow. The deeply religious Negro masses whom the Kremlin wanted to use as expendables in the struggle for power shied away from the “Party.” A frontal attack on religion resulted in isolation from Negroes. Therefore, deception was to be tried. The honeyed phrase replaced harsh words. The smile replaced the smirk. The velvet glove covered the mailed fist. Humility replaced arrogance. The handshake replaced hostility. All that was distasteful and wicked in the past was to be forgotten in the face of “a need for a common front against the white oppressors.” *The devil was sick—an angel he would be.*

Application of the new line embarked the Communists on an era of outstanding success in infiltrating and penetrating the Negro Church.

White ministers acting as missionaries, using the race angle as bait, aided in the cultivation of Negro ministers for work in the Red solar system of organizations. Bribery through gifts, paid lectures, flattery through long applause at staged rallies, favorable mention in the red controlled press were not the only methods employed to corrupt the Negro ministers. The use of sex and perversion as a means of political blackmail was an accepted red tactic.

At the same time that all this was going on at the top, the “comrades” were building cells below in the church “to guarantee that decisions made at the top would be brought down to the congregation.”

The importance attached to this work is clearly shown in the report of the speeches of Earl Browder, then General Secretary of the Communist Party, and Gerhard Eisler, alias Edwards, Moscow representative to the plenary session of the National Committee of the Communist Party in the United States. It states:

Comrades Browder, Edwards and Ford have spoken about the necessity of making a turn in our Negro work . . . how to connect ourselves with the organized masses . . . in the United States there are . . . of the Negro population . . . 10 million in churches. The problem of how to penetrate these organizations is of the utmost political importance.§

The bulk of Negro church members are in the South. They live by the “Good Book.” Anyone against the “Good Book” is of the devil. There is no in between. The Red carpet-baggers discovered this when they touched the Negro’s religion. So they avoided this sore spot in order to snare their intended victims. Get them involved in the movement first and later do the job on their religious convictions was the order. Anything else was putting the cart before the horse.

The new line went like this: Jesus, the carpenter, was a worker like the Communists. He was against the “money changers,” the “capitalists,” the “exploiters” of that day. That is why he drove them from the temple. The

Communists are the modern day fighters against the capitalists or money changers. If Jesus were living today, he would be persecuted like the Communists who seek to do good for the common people.

Alert law enforcement agents made it extremely difficult and hazardous for the Reds to work openly. Consequently, they drew heavily upon the accumulated knowledge and experience of their comrades engaged in illegal work in other parts of the world to operate with the least risk in the South. Of all their methods used, it was generally agreed that the Church is the “best cover for illegal work.”

Gilbert Green, one of the top Reds in this country, reported as follows:

For example in the South we have more than 300 members who are also members of church youth organizations—especially the Baptist Young Peoples Union. In this district (Alabama) . . . where possible we should build . . . units in the Church Youth organizations. Why? Because in the South, especially for the Negro youth, the church is the center of cultural and social activity. It is here that we must work. By building our units in the church organizations we can also improve our work under the illegal conditions, as it will be easier to work in the church organizations. In Alabama there are certain places in which we can in a short while take over the church organizations of youth, under our leadership, and these can become *legal covers for our work in the South*. (Italics mine.)||

* *Political Secretariat, Communist International, Moscow, U.S.S.R. Resolution on Negro Question in U.S.*

† Issued by International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers of R.I.L.U (Red International of Labor Unions.)

‡ A cynical Communist name for the clergy.

§ *Party Organizer, March, 1935*. page 16, Issued by the Central Committee Communist Party.

|| Excerpt Report of Gil Green for the National Bureau to a meeting of the Enlarged National Executive Committee, held in New York on February 23, 1935. *Int. of Youth*, March, 1935, pages 25, 26.

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Chapter Three: RED PLOT TO USE NEGROES

